

NANAIMO PADDLERS

GUIDELINES FOR PARTICIPANTS IN CLUB PADDLES

People who agree to coordinate a paddling trip for the Nanaimo Paddlers are simply agreeing to arrange and organize a paddling event. They are not expected to be expert paddlers. The Nanaimo Paddlers is a club of peers, all with varying paddling abilities. On all club paddles, each participant is expected to be aware of their own abilities and limitations and be responsible for their own safety.

To increase the safety margin however, the Nanaimo Paddlers Club suggests the following guidelines:

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS FOR COORDINATORS

Prior to Departure: At Home, Before You Leave

- Be aware of tides and currents in the area of your proposed paddle.
- Check the weather forecast.
- Decide on a meeting place and time of departure, and be aware of the time of sunset.
- Advise anyone who wishes to participate of the anticipated trip plan including the estimated distance.
- Have any non-members confirm that they have signed and delivered the Club's waiver release at least 3 days prior to the paddle.
- Have each potential participant confirm that he/she has taken a basic kayaking course and has done successful wet exits and assisted rescues: if the person cannot confirm the foregoing, he should be advised that he may not participate in the paddle.
- Suggest that the participant check the weather forecast, tides and currents themselves and bring a navigation chart if they have one.
- Remind participants that they are required to bring the basic required safety gear plus whatever they have of the following: whistle, spare clothes, first aid, GPS, VHF radio if they have an operator's licence, hot drink.
- Consider obtaining the Club First Aid Kit and a VHF radio.
- On extended trips consider making a float plan and leave it with someone.

SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS FOR ALL PARTICIPANTS

On the Beach Prior to Launch:

Hold a pre-launch briefing covering the following topics:

General

- Tides and currents
- Weather forecast
- Sunrise, sunset

- Have all paddlers confirm that they have the required safety gear. (PFD, throw line, spare paddle, pump, and whistle that works.)
- Ask what other safety gear is being carried and by whom: first aid kits, VHF radios, GPSs, tow belts, flares, repair kits. Who knows how to use them?

Discuss Safety

- Ask which paddlers are comfortable in performing assisted rescues.
- Advise that in case of a capsize, while the rescue is underway, the rest of the group needs to keep close together, and wait in a sheltered area if possible.
- Advise that if rafting to remember that in windy conditions a raft will travel faster over the water than unrafted kayaks.
- Advise that if being rescued to remember to follow the directions of the rescuer.

Establish Signals

- Vertical paddle (held straight up): Come together
- Horizontal Paddle: STOP
- Whistle, one loud blast: STOP and look
- Whistle, series of loud toots: Come to me, or come together.

Group Awareness

- The details of the trip plan are explained: route, destination, stops, distance, time.
- Buddy System: it is strongly advised that people partner up with someone else—to keep an eye on each other, especially in a large group.
- Every paddle should have a sweep and a lead. For small groups 7 and under, the sweep may also be the leader. Sweeps and leads are nominated and their jobs explained. Participants will be between the sweep and the lead.
- The individuals in a group should also keep an eye on each other. The sweep watches the group, but who is watching the sweep?
- Maximum recommended group size is 14. If over that number, split into two groups.
- If anyone wishes to leave the group, they will ensure that the coordinator and the rest of the group are aware that they are leaving.
- If the group splits for any reason, each group becomes responsible for itself, with its own safety considerations, including sweeps and leads.
- It is EVERYONE'S responsibility NOT to become a LIABILITY to the group. KNOW YOUR LIMITATIONS.

Night Paddles

- **Bring lights.** Headlamps work best. Glow sticks worn on PFDs are also highly effective. A combination of the two works well. Each member of the group will be given a number as it is easier for paddlers to state their number in turn during a paddle than to count heads in the dark.

THEN, GO OUT AND HAVE FUN....AND A GOOD, AND SAFE, TRIP!